

Planning Officer: Raymond Cole

Planning Application Ref: P/132/20/RES

Location: Land north of Hook Lane, Pagham

Description of works: Approval of reserved matters following P/30/19/OUT for 300 No. new homes, internal roads, footpaths & cycleways, car parking & landscaping. This application affects the setting of a listed building & falls within Strategic Site H SP2, CIL Zone 1 (Zero Rated)

Comments on Application:

- I have considered this application by means of a desktop review, using the information and plans submitted as well as online resources. Previous consideration from site and familiarity with surrounding areas provides further insight to the proposal.
- The applicants have employed FPCR Environment and Design Ltd to submit a revised Arboricultural Assessment & Method Statement (AA/AMS) inclusive of a Tree Protection Plan, for this project.
- The Tree Survey data is comprehensive and accords with the requirements of BS5837:2012. I agree with the retention category ratings for on and off-site trees.
- There does not appear to be an approved surface water drainage strategy for the site. This fundamental element of the design ought to be addressed to our satisfaction in association with layout proposals, so that we are not subsequently held hostage to flood mitigation measures which could then impact heavily on retained trees/landscape plans/open space provision.
- With relatively few trees across the site (significant perimeter hedgerows aside) there are few opportunities for conflict between trees and any construction. Those trees to be retained have been afforded sufficient room to allow future growth without significant constraint, although we must await the final drainage strategy (LPA approved) before a comprehensive understanding of tree retention/protection is reached. It is encouraging at this stage to see H2 and G3 afforded ample room to flourish – potentially important screening between developments.
- I draw attention to the nominal root protection areas (RPA) of retained trees and their growth potential as obvious constraints to the siting of any SUDS (e.g. swale or attenuation pond) or introduction of subterranean utility apparatus. The provision of appropriate buffer/easement around such features must also take into account that growth potential (roots), to limit the risk of damage occurring during future maintenance of the same, from compaction/contamination of the soil structure.
- Any improvements to existing or creation of new watercourses within the RPA of preserved trees to be fully considered, details provided in advance and to our satisfaction. Where there is a significant risk of damage to those trees arising from such operations, then an alternative strategy should be proposed.
- Para. 5.19 of the AA/AMS proposes supervised excavation within the RPA of the most valuable tree on site (T6 – oak, subject of TPO). Despite being neither detailed in extent or explicitly illustrated on either Tree Retention or Tree Protection plans, such a proposal would incur a *fait accompli* for the tree in the event substantial root material is encountered within the area of excavation – with damage resulting and potential decline. I find this unacceptable and recommend that minor but potentially significant element of the drainage strategy be abandoned.
- Note: RPA – for a large, open site such as this we require a 2m buffer zone in addition to the calculated RPA - as promoted within our Supplementary Planning Documents: Arun District Public Open Space, Playing Pitches and Built Facilities (Appendix 9) and Arun Design Guide (E.02 Landscape Structures & Trees, p48). This is to ensure adequate room for any construction or other working alongside the RPA and account for any topographical margin of error during survey – thus removing the risk of any activity spilling over into the RPA and demanding a reduction in the Construction Exclusion Zone (RPA).

There must be an overriding justification for RPA incursion, not a presumption that BS5837:2012 – Trees in relation to Design, Demolition and Construction promotes activity in the RPA. It does not. It presents a range of options to consider, where such incursion is unavoidable or where no reasonable alternative exists.

Conclusions:

- The proposed layout, so far as it is described and in general terms, is certainly achievable without undue detriment to retained trees and hedgerow although important information is lacking (see below).
- In the absence of an approved surface water Drainage Strategy I remain concerned for the potential impact on such vegetation, so must register an Objection – although expect that to be easily overcome with a sympathetic design showing harmonious relationships between existing RPAs/future growth potential and appropriately buffered SUDS features.

Recommendation:

- As it stands, I am unable to support the site layout and so register an **OBJECTION**.

Mark Warwick
Tree Officer / Parks and Greenspace Team